

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-07
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R 130707Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY SANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0393
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

S E C R E T SANA 0619

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: PFOR, YE, ET
SUBJ: YART/ETHIOPIAN RELATIONS

REF:ADDIS 0859

SUMMARY: YARG IN REACTION TO GUNPOINT DIPLOMACY
OF ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT OVER RED SEA ISLANDS, HAS
FORMALLY REITERATED YAR CLAIMS AND ASKED ETHIOPIAN
FOREIGN MINISTER TO VISIT SANA FOR DISCUSSIONS.
TWO CONSEQUENCES WHICH YEMENIS EXPECT OF WORSENING
RELATIONS WITH ETHIOPIAN WILL BE MORAL IF NOT MATERIAL
ASSISTANCE TO ETRITREANS PLUS INVITATION FOR YARG
TO ATTEND RED SEA CONFERENCE IN KHARTOUM. END
SUMMARY.

1. AHMAD ABDO SA'ID TOLD AMBASSADOR ON FEBRUARY
11 THAT "6 OR 7 DAYS AGO" TWO ETHIOPIAN GUNBOATS
HAD THREATENED YAR SAILORS ON RED SEA ISLANDS OF
HANISH AND ZUGAR WITH SEIZURE OF THEIR BOAT AND ARREST
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IF THEY CAME TO ISLANDS AGAIN.

2. YAR PROMPTLY SENT PROTEST NOTE REITERATING YARG
CLAIMS TO ISLANDS AND INVITING ETHIOPIAN FOREIGN
MINISTER TO VISIT SANA TO DISCUSS MATTER. NOTE
PRESEUMABLY SAID YARG HAS NO DESIRE TO INCREASE
TENSIONS BUT IS DETERMINED TO STAND BY ITS RIGHTS

OVER THE ISLANDS.

3. SA'ID SAID THAT ONE CONSEQUENCE OF THIS LATEST EVIDENCE OF ETHIOPIAN HOSTILITY TO YARG IS THE DETERMINATION OF SANA GOVERNMENT TO BE "MORE HOSPITABLE TO RELIGIOUS AND CONSERVATIVE ELEMENTS" IN ELF. SA'ID ALSO SAID YARG "WOULD LOOK THE OTHER WAY" IF FORMER ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR DESTA (NOW IN EXILE HERE AT YEMENI EXPENSE) WANTS TO HELP EDU. NEVERTHELESS, MAIN THRUST OF YEMENI ACTIVITIES IS TO SEE THAT ELF DID NOT BECOME COMPLETELY RADICALIZED. YARG DOES NOT RPT NOT INTEND TO PROVIDE MATERIAL ASSISTANCE TO ELF ELEMENTS AND WILL SUPPLY ONLY MORAL SUPPORT; LATTER APPARENTLY WILL FALL SHORT OF PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS SUCH AS ONE RECENTLY MADE BY NIMEIRI.

4. SA'ID ALSO TOLD AMBASADOR THAT YEMENIS EXPECTED TO ATTEND RED SEA SECURITY CONFERENCE WHICH NIMEIRI WILL HOST IN KHARTOUM. THEY WILL REITERATE AT THIS CONFERENCE YARG DESIRES ON DJIBOUTI. YEMENIS HOPE DJIBOUTI WILL BE INDEPENDENT BUT RETAIN MILIARY PRESNCE.

COMMENT: RELATIONS WITH ETHIOPIA SEEM TO HAVE "TAKEN A TURN FOR THE WORSE" AS AHMAD ABDOH SA'ID SAID AND YEMENI OPPISITION TO THE REGIME MAY ESCALATE DESPITE LARGE AND HARD-PRESSED YEMENI COMMUNITY IN ETHIOPIA. GUNBOAT INCIDENT FOLLOWING ON HEELS OF ALLEGED ETHIOPIAN ROLE IN
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OVERFLIGHTS HAVE BEEN USED BY YEMENIS TO CALL FOR CLOSER POLITICAL AND MILITARY COOPERATION WITH LITTORAL ARAB STATES OF RED SEA. INVITATION TO KHARTOUM CONFERENCE WOULD BE DIPLOMATIC PRIZE FOR YEMENIS LIKE SA'ID AND ASNAJ WHO HAVE BEEN TRYING TO PROJECT HAMDI ON TO A LARGER STAGE. ALSO, AS SEPTTEL MAKES CLEAR, THESE DEVELOPMENTS COULD LEAD TO NEW DEFENSE MEASURES ON PART OF YAR AND SAUDIS. ADDIS REFTTEL REPORTS THAT YAR IS NOW "REACHONARY ARAB ENEMY" BODES ILL FOR FUTURE OF THIS COMMUNITY AND PEACE OVER ISLANDS.SCOTES

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